The COMMONWEAL

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THE WEEK		187
WILL ROESER	*T. D. Lyons*	190
WISE MAN'S SONS	*Anne Fremantle*	194
EAST AND WEST	*Egbert L. Munzer*	198
THE STAGE	*Kappo Phelan*	205
THE SCREEN	*Philip T. Hartung*	206
BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS GIVING		207

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Canada Boils Over

MANY AMERICANS must remain a trifle puzzled over the conscription rumpus in Canada. For clarity's sake it must be explained that when Canada entered the war she sought to prevent the disturbances which in Quebec characterized attempts to apply a draft law during the last war, by limiting her conscription act to service within the Dominion, carefully specifying that all troops sent overseas would be volunteers. Later a referendum was held on this question. The result was a victory for proponents of conscription for overseas duty, but since the Province of Quebec voted overwhelmingly against it, the Canadian Government retained the volunteer system. The results yielded by this system have been truly remarkable. But a miscalculation of the rôle to be played by the infantry in this war became apparent during the course of the French campaign, and the need for replacements in this branch of the service began to exceed the number of men available through the volunteer system. Finally Canada's Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, yielded to the pressure of events and secured an Order in Council permitting him to ship 16,000 conscript infantrymen overseas.

The reaction to this momentous change in policy has been fully as excited as those familiar with Canadian sentiment might have expected. The French immediately began to cry out, "Betrayal!" whereas Mr. King's Conservative opponents, who have long been campaigning in favor of overseas conscription, cried out that he had really not changed policy at all, since he was limiting the number of those to be sent and frankly still favored the voluntary system.

Mr. King is a very astute politician. His handling of a terribly explosive situation comes very near being statesmanship. He saw that events forced him to do what he did; but by limiting his action as he did, he put his English-speaking opponents in the position of having to criticize him for not changing his general point of view, and the fact that they fell into the trap will probably reduce French opposition, since it will show French Canadians how much worse off they would be under any other Ministry.

But to discuss the issue merely on the level of parliamentary manipulation is to misunderstand it. The issue goes very deep. Bitter resentment has been piling up among English Canadians against their French fellow citizens because of the conviction on the part of the former that they alone are bearing the heavy burdens of war. It is generally believed that the "Zombies"—the men who, though conscripted, have not volunteered for overseas service—are predominantly French and the volunteers almost exclusively English. This happens not to be the case. Out of a total of about 57,000 Zombies, only 22,000 are French. Plenty of English conscripts would just as soon stay home. It is true that Ontario has supplied far more than its proportionate share of volunteers, and it is also true that French volunteers are proportionately less than the English generally. But the facts are very much at variance with what is popularly believed. And it is what is popularly believed that is fundamentally important. In other words, we are seeing a tragic exacerbation of antipathy between French and English Canadians, on every level. The Ontario out-and-outers find in the French attitude a confirmation of their traditional hatred and distrust of the Church. Hence the quarrel seems to many Canadian Protestants fundamentally a religious quarrel. In fact it is not. In fact it is a quarrel between two cultures, symbolized and emphasized by their respective and differing languages.

If the war is to end promptly, these conflicting nationalisms will once again subside to the point where they are tolerable within a single nation. But if the war continues, one of its sad consequences will have been to destroy the accomplishment of all those who have dreamed of Canada as an amicably united nation. Already the French extremists are frankly saying that the only solution to the conscription problem is independence, and the Ontario extremists are whispering that the only thing to do is put the French once for all into their proper place of servitude and inferiority.

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Agreements instead of Treaties?

AS WORRIMENT over the likelihood of American ratification of the peace treaties grows, certain leaders have been casting about for ways of circumventing the two-thirds Senate majority requirement. One ingenious suggestion would meet the problem by substituting agreements for treaties in the peace settlement. Such agreements might even be concluded by the Executive. Normally, however, an international "agreement" is strictly temporary in character and very often the period for which it is to run is definitely specified. It is primarily the more or less permanent character of what was agreed upon at Dumbarton Oaks which under our present set-up would unquestionably make it necessary to obtain Senate ratification to be constitutional.

Other alternatives appear equally unpromising. Technically a Constitutional Convention similar to that of 1789 could be called for the purpose of amending the two-thirds rule. Theoretically, also, both Houses of Congress together with three-fourths of the States could enact an amendment which would substitute simple majority for the two-thirds requirement. Yet there is every indication that this would be stopped cold in the Senate, for no House action would budge its senior partner from the maintenance of this long-hallowed prerogative. If we are to be realistic about the situation, we must therefore face the fact that the only hope of taking the international action required lies with the members of the new Senate themselves. If public opinion nationally, and with special emphasis from home constituents, is vigilant and persistent, the treaties will go through.

Notes on Argentina

THE TRUE NATURE of the present Buenos Aires régime becomes more apparent from occasional minor news dispatches appearing here and there. During the past week two stories proved particularly useful for better grasping the situation. The *Christian Science Monitor* tells of the publication of a 50,000-word White Book by the American Committee for the Defense of the Hemisphere of Montevideo covering the period from July 15, 1943, to October 15, 1944. Of these thousands of words the *Monitor* reproduces exactly twenty-eight; they indicate two things: that the dictatorship has lent support to elements which the Axis *could* utilize and that Argentina has prevented the formation of a solid front against Axis aggression. While none of this is terribly novel or startling, it squares rather well with a story in *Satevepost* that the real power is not the publicized Colonel Peron, but rather the men who give him the orders, the officer corps of the Buenos Aires garrison, majors, captains, lieutenants. And all because there is no other armed force in the country comparable as to numerical strength, modern armament and strategic position near the heart of the capital. It is these lesser commanders of 10,000 men—with all the limitations in vision characteristic of such professionals—who are calling the turn down there just now.

Keep the Farmer in Mind

TOO FEW of the speculations on how to maintain employment at full steam after the war have given consideration to the farmer's rôle in the new peacetime economy. How unfortunate this is, for national purchasing power cannot be maintained if our agricultural families are doing badly. And what they will be up against is already indicated. Right now, in the very midst of this global war, the War Food Administration has called for a reduction of 1,000,000 acres in previous goals for wheat acreage because of the huge surpluses which have been piling up in spite of everything. When it is borne in mind that the only sound policy is for the United States to assist ruined nations to reach the point of self-sustenance as quickly as possible, the long-range prospects for increased American agricultural exports are bad.

Another phenomenon dangerous for the farmer is the inflation of land values which always accompanies the artificial demand for agricultural commodities brought on by war exigencies. Again, such subsidies which are now applied to keep down the price of bread and curb inflation are expected to cease when peace finally arives, at the very time when demand for produce is likely to slacken. And it is obvious that the other type of subsidy—which enables us to "dump" our produce in foreign markets—will come to no good end.

Apart from a gradual transformation of American agriculture along family-type lines (the very reverse of what is now happening and probably not universally applicable even if the American farmer were willing to attempt it) there seems to remain only one over-all major remedy: crop insurance. Anyone who is committed to the idea of social security must favor the principle that when the farmer is unable to cash in on his crop due to forces which are beyond his control, he should have some means of effective redress. President Roosevelt has expressed himself as dissatisfied that a fully self-supporting insurance program had not been formulated. The crop-insurance bill recently passed by the House would seem to afford too much largesse for the big commercial producers. Would it not be better if such a scheme, although coordinated nationally, be much more highly decentralized? Could not the farmers themselves do more to operate such a system through their own organizations? The principle of crop insurance is good: what is so far lacking is the development of a just and workable scheme. America's postwar prosperity requires it.

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The Tunnel

OF COURSE there was always a good deal of the fairy tale about the whole business and everyone was supposed to live happily ever after; that is why Americans who look at Europe from America now are puzzled and disappointed. As soon as the Germans were put out of a conquered country everyone except the Germans was supposed to be happy; when the Germans were driven out of a quarter of a country, as they were in Sicily, the Palermitans were supposed to be very happy, and when the Germans were thrown out of half of Italy the Neapolitans and the Romans cheered; they were supposed to keep on cheering until the Neapolitans went back to dancing the tarantella and writing songs, and the Romans re-entered Aragno's, Greco's and countless lesser trattorie. It is true that when the Germans were expelled from Cassino there was no one left in Cassino to feel one way or another about the matter but that was an exceptional case.

When the Germans were driven out of nearly all of France and a part of Holland and out of most of Belgium, the Belgians, the Dutch and the French were supposed to be happy and to stay happy. Happy and grateful, and it would be a matter of trade treaties; eventually we would fill their gas stations; they, and we, and everyone else would also be secure and peace would be secure because peace was the fairy princess waiting until the Germans were driven out of everywhere and then she would walk in a new dress all round the world for all nations to applaud. The Germans are not yet driven out of everywhere so we still may hope, but it is not peace, concord and happiness that we see in the places from which the enemy have been driven out; the Italians, the French, the Dutch, the Belgians—not to mention the Greeks—do not seem to have come out of the war into any too green pastures, they all seem to be in a great political turmoil and when Americans read the complicated stories that are told about them in the papers, they feel puzzled and disappointed and they wonder what has gone wrong.

Nothing has gone wrong. Sforza is not in the Castello Sforzesco but then he never was, de Gaulle is not in Paris but that is only because he has gone on a trip to Moscow, there is still the Dutch Queen, there still is a Belgian King and even his brother the Regent, there still is Umberto who is a sort of Viceroy; in these countries still there are loyal subjects, and in France there still are citizens loyal to the Republic. There even are people still fascinated by the horse that bit them; there still is a Mussolini somewhere; there still are some Quislings, the Belgian Degrelle is in Berlin. Everywhere there still are the communists. All is right with the world.

That is to say no more than that the multiplication table still works. If people are hungry and cold they are also unhappy, when people are free to argue they will argue, when in every nation in Europe, in every liberated nation or half-liberated nation, the future looks dark and uncertain, then everywhere the argument will be bitter and violent. That is why there is confusion in the liberated countries of Europe. We can have an election here and it is conducted peaceably even though it is very important, but that is because we are sure of ourselves. And when we get through the war we shall have everything that we remember to return to. All our soldiers have things they remember that they want very much to return to. But that is not the way it is in Europe. The Europeans have different things to return to, a difficult situation to return to, and when they return to it they find that it is even more difficult than it was before. When we get through with the war we shall return to a greater security than we ever had; and even the old one seemed to us delightful and complete. Now that the French and some of the Italians, some of the Dutch, some of the Belgians stand again free in their countries, they find they have returned to a situation which they knew was precarious and they find that their insecurity is even greater, far greater than it was before. There is more to worry about than there ever was before. All the immediate things—and sometimes you would say the trouble does not show, as in France, but the destruction is there just the same, and sometimes the destruction is appalling and obvious as in Italy and there is no point in arguing as to just where the people are the hungriest and in greatest misery—and all the things that have to be arranged for the future; the social, economic and financial systems, the political régimes, the international agreements. Of course we shall have our troubles and our worries here but there is no one in Europe who would not take them over from us in exchange for his own.

Everything would be easier for us to understand if we had not this idea that you can go through the war as through a tunnel and the landscape will be pleasant on the other side, with the fields and the cows and the dairy maids. The tunnel of war is like the tunnels at Coney Island; you come out of them where you started. You can go into the tunnel just for the ride, or because you are in love with the girl, just as you can go into the tunnel of war with the best of reasons and purposes, or under the greatest compulsion, or recklessly, or with devoted courage. Only, when you come out, you find that something awful has happened outside while you were inside taking the ride.

C. G. PAULDING.

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Will Roeser

T. D. Lyons

"No one seriously contests the statement that if we are to find new oil fields, *the daring gambler is more needed than ever before.*" Paul S. Stacey, in THE COMMONWEAL, April 28, 1944.

THERE were of course no roads in the Indian Territory, except trails and wagon tracks and all the travel throughout the country, except on the railroad, was done by teams. Will Roeser, however, owned an automobile—the only automobile in Magic City—a large, red, imported French car which had not only a wonderful horn but also a bell and so the car traveling down the unpaved streets of Magic City sounded like a railroad locomotive. Mr. William H. Roeser was one of the leading operatives in the Glenn Pool.

In 1907 a young lawyer who had taken his sheepskin in Dakota the previous June was happy to be in the Indian Territory—among the Five Civilized Tribes, the Cherokees, the Creeks, the Choctaws, the Chickasaws, and the Seminoles—he was happy to be in the oil country, although it was very hot, because there would be, of course, all the business of the oil leases and some of this business might reasonably be supposed to come his way. And since his law curriculum did not include any study of Indian titles or the law of oil and gas, he was glad to get occupation in a law office as a messenger. In 1907 I was a messenger in this small town of the Creek nation which, through the discovery of the oil fields, had with reason and in fact changed its name to Magic City, and I was waiting in the law office for someone to give me a message to carry when Will Roeser walked in.

He was, at that time, thirty-two years old, a pleasant, affable young man who had started in Beaumont, Texas, had been broke two or three times, but had struck it rich in the Glenn Pool. He was running fifty strings of tools. Mr. Roeser entered the office and equipped with three complete sets—in quadruplicate—of Departmental lease forms, hurriedly left it. But in an hour he was back raging furiously; a lease broker on whom he had depended to go to Okmulgee and get a livery team to drive out in the country and take leases on three Indian allotments had gone on a periodic spree and it was well known that this always took three weeks. Apparently he was racking his brain to think of someone to send on this mission, and he asked one of the lawyers in the office if he knew anybody, meaning some other lease man or lease broker, who could go to the country, locate the Indians, take the leases and take the lessors before the United States Commissioner to have them properly acknowledged. When no name was suggested, he turned around to where I sat at a miniature desk just inside the office door, and giving me a good look, said, "Say, kid, you know something about this game, don't you? You have gotten these Departmental lease forms at Muskogee?" "Yes," I said, "I did." "Well," he said, "here's $400.00 and here's the descriptions, here's the names of these Indians, here's my card," and he scratched something on the back of it and said, "Take that to that livery barn at Okmulgee, and go and get these leases for me." I must have looked around in a sort of dazed condition of wonderment, but one of the lawyers made a signal to me unseen by Mr. Roeser, and I said, "All right," reached up and took out from under his arm the three sets of Departmental lease forms which he was still holding.

I left the office, but made some excuse to come back and got a few further directions. When I arrived at Okmulgee, I took the card which he had given me to the livery stable and showed it to the liveryman in charge. He looked startled and said, "Yes, Bill Roeser's all right, but I haven't got any drivers, they have all quit to go to work in these damned oil fields where they can make four times as much as honest business like the livery stable trade can pay." I said, "Oh, that doesn't make any difference, I am used to horses, I can drive a team." He looked at me with a very suspicious air, and in a moment said somewhat tauntingly, "Well, a man that knows how to drive a team ought to know how to harness them up and hitch them to the buckboard. There's your team," he added pointedly.

I went back, and in three minutes had both horses harnessed except for the bridles. I turned them around and led them out of the stall. The liveryman still was not fully convinced. He said, "In this part of the country we usually put the bridles on before we hitch a team to the buckboard." "Well," I said, "in the part of the country I came from we usually water a team before we hitch them up." He laughed and said, "I guess that's right. I will put in a sack of oats." Since we had got friendly, I told him the quandary we were in, that I had no idea where these Indians

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lived or how to locate them. "Yes," he said, "that's just like Billy Roeser, but he's a great fellow, and you get those leases for him, don't come back without them, because you will sure have law business if you make good with him." As we finished hitching the team to the buckboard, he gave a big grin and said, "I believe I have the dopesheet for you." He said, "Wait till I go to the telephone." He came back in a minute and gave me directions to drive about eight blocks and stop at a certain corner. "There," he said, "an old Baptist Indian preacher whom I just talked to will get in this buckboard with you and stay with you till you get those Indians signed up. I promised him $10.00 a day and found." ("And found" meant all his expenses.) He said, "He's your man, and you ought to find the Indians in three days."

I drove to the point designated, picked up the old Indian preacher, and we drove over the country not for just three days but for seven days, before we found the Indians.

I had not used all of Roeser's $400.00 and remarked once or twice that I had some of that money still left, but neither Mr. Roeser nor either of the lawyers in whose office I had a desk made any suggestion concerning it, so I used part of it in the purchase of five five-dollar meal tickets at the Bismarck Café, thinking that my fee might be about the same as the Indian preacher's or approximately $75.00, and that I was safe in using a third of the amount.

The day before Thanksgiving, Bill Roeser, as he had shut down operations in the oil field, came into the office and after some talk with some of the lawyers, came over to my desk and said, "Well, it's about time for us to have a settlement on that trip of yours for those Tecumseh leases." I fumbled in my desk and pulled out a statement showing the expenditures, and that there was a balance of a hundred dollars in cash. He immediately asked me what I thought my fee should be. "Well," I said, "I have no idea." But I thought that since the Indian preacher had got $10.00 a day and found, that perhaps he would be willing to pay me about the same, which would leave me in debt to him about $21.00, which I had been holding for him and had in cash in a drawer. I reached over to the drawer and laid down a twenty dollar bill and a one dollar bill. There was evidently some prearrangement about the matter, because the lawyers for whom I was working as messenger, together with some other oil men, had gathered round and it was very evident that a couple of quarts of good Scotch whiskey had been uncorked and recently sampled. Mr. Roeser had evidently intended to give some sort of stage-play for the amusement of the company, but his naturally good heart and generous disposition could not be restrained. He reached into his inside pocket and handed me a draft for a thousand dollars. I was naturally overpowered and could not get my bearings. I finally managed to say that it certainly could not be his intention to give me that for my services and that it was far too much, which was undoubtedly correct. "No," said Mr. Roeser, "I had already spent $1,900.00 sending worthless lease grafters to get those leases and they came back with a cock-and-bull story that the Indians wouldn't sign. I knew all the time they were liars, and I can tell you that you earned that fee, and you don't need to have any hesitancy about keeping that thousand dollars, because I just sold a half interest in those three leases to Charlie Page for fifteen thousand; you've earned your money, and I'll give you another job one of these days." This started me off as a lawyer. The other lawyers put my name on the door, and I was a full-fledged practitioner from that time on.

★

Not long afterward there was the occasion of Bill's farewell party to the little shabby frame house which he first owned in the "Magic City" before he made his great strike in the Glenn Pool. A local magnate had begun the building of a pretentious cut-stone home with wonderful hardwood floors, marvelous doors, magnificent grounds occupying a whole city block. When he had the house practically completed, Bill sauntered in one day to his office and asked the cost of the new home. My recollection is that the waterworks magnate said that it cost him almost $50,000.00. "Well," Bill said, "here's $75,000.00 for a deed to it today and possession tomorrow." The waterworks magnate was so overcome by the offer that he immediately acceded and Bill telephoned up to our office to have the deed drawn.

That night Bill gave a party in the old shabby frame house. That very afternoon he had telegraphed to John Wanamaker's for five carloads of their best furniture, giving a general prospectus of the new home. Out at the party, in addition to several lawyers, there were Charlie Page, who was coming forward as an oil producer, Colonel Newell, Gene Crimmins, a great driller, and Frank Ritchey; and Harry Kerstetter, who ran the DeLuxe Gambling Parlor in the Robinson Hotel, appeared some time after midnight with his staff and furnished whiskey and turkey and roast beef sandwiches. The party became pretty hilarious toward daylight. Bill's much adored wife Ethel, who had helped him in his dark days, even to the extent of running an oil camp boarding house, so the story went, had not been well and was back in Ohio visiting. Bill intended the new home and the new furniture as a gift and surprise for the adored Ethel, who was indeed a grand character. About the time the first streaks of dawn appeared, Bill seemed seized with an inspiration; he told us about all the wonderful new furniture and began

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to compare it with the cheap "battered old sticks," as he described them, which were in the old house. Gene Crimmins promptly suggested a bonfire celebration. Frank Ritchey kicked out a window, shoved the tables and chairs out through it and set the furniture afire. The startled neighbors called the fire department and no harm was done, except that there was a little difficulty in preventing the issuance of warrants for disturbing the peace, to satisfy some of the more prim members of the community.

A few days after this, I had occasion to attend a hearing in the police court. Bill was a great friend and patron of Harry Kerstetter and enjoyed a little roulette play as an appetizer before breakfast. He would occasionally invite me over to watch his play, and then to go to breakfast with him. In this way I became well acquainted with Harry Kerstetter and his partner, Ralph Deckard. Early one morning, about 5:30 a. m., there was a rapping on the little two-room apartment that I occupied, and I heard Bill's voice calling me "Judge," a title which he only conferred when slightly mellowed. I opened the door and Bill and Harry Kerstetter came in. I, of course, started to dress immediately, while they, in Bill's phrase, "laid the case before me." The police court in those days met at 6:00 a. m. in the morning. Harry explained that Pussyfoot Johnson had been raiding and that this had filled the local police force with the spirit of envy and discord, and that partly actuated thereby and partly to satisfy public sentiment, on the preceding night they staged a great raid on his gambling parlor. They threw a certain amount of furniture and material out the window and burned it in the street, to the edification of newspaper reporters and uplifters. The chief himself seized Harry's valuable roulette wheel. Harry said, "There is no trouble at all about that, the police and I are old friends, and when the excitement dies down they will return the wheel to me in A-1 shape. However," he said, "there is one thing that sort of went askew." And I judged from this remark that the raid was not a complete surprise to Mr. Kerstetter, but that it was a sort of propitiatory offering to the public to forestall the bringing of Pussyfoot Johnson to the "Magic City." He said, "My bank roll containing $6,000.00 was lying there and one of these new cops that didn't know any better grabbed that money and took it over to the police station." Bill then spoke up and said, "That's why I told Harry to come over and get you, Judge."

By this time we were en route to the police station. The police judge was an old friend of mine of the same political fraternity. He had been a prominent lawyer in another state, but had become somewhat decayed financially, and was glad to have the little salary which this position paid. I had given him such backing as I could and he was appreciative. He was a very learned man not only in law but in the classics, and enjoyed exhibiting his knowledge of literature by an occasional Latin quotation. I recalled one of his Latin quotations which had stuck in my memory, and it proved convincing argument. When we went into the police court, he immediately interrupted his ordinary docket of drunk and disorderly cases and asked me what the occasion of my appearance was. I explained it very briefly and I opened the statutes which authorized confiscation of gambling paraphernalia, and stated my contention that the statute did not authorize the confiscation of money. I said, "Your Honor recalls the ancient maxim of Justinian, *'non olet pecunia,'* " The judge immediately interrupted me and said, "I fear, my young friend, that you have confused Justinian with Seneca. The maxim is from Seneca, but it is sound, and certainly there is no authority for the confiscation of money as a part of gambling paraphernalia. As the distinguished Senator Ingalls once said, 'there are two things that are never tainted—votes and money do not stink.' " He asked the City Attorney if he desired to be heard and the City Attorney promptly admitted that the statute did not authorize the seizure of money. The Chief of Police thereupon laid out the gambling house bank roll and asked Mr. Kerstetter if he desired to count it. Harry looked at it a moment, said, "No, it looks as if it is all here." And the chief picked it up and handed it to me. I asked the court if there was any further proof necessary. He said, "No, you may take the bankroll and restore it to its owner."

As we walked out of the police station, Bill Roeser asked Harry if he had seen my thoroughbred Kentucky saddle horse of the Black MacDonald stock, which I had purchased with a part of the thousand dollars he had given me for acquiring the Tecumseh leases. Harry said, "No," and he would like to see him. Hickok's livery barn where I kept the horse was next door to the police station and we walked in there. The stable boys led out the horse and put the saddle on him. I stepped into the saddle and rode him out in front with just the halter, to show some of his paces, and of course before doing so handed Harry the bank roll. When I got off the horse, Harry said, "Well, you're a great collection lawyer—to turn over the money before you get your fee." He said, "How much do I owe you?" I said, "We haven't had to work at it more than an hour. Just whatever suits you." He had opened up the roll and took out the inside six bills which he handed me. They turned out to be hundred dollar bills. "Well," I said, "that seems too much." "No," said Harry, "ten percent for collection, there's $6,000.00 in that roll." Money was loose then.

Early in the following year, Frank Richey, who was one of Bill's favorite drillers, said Bill had

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sent him over to tell about a claim he had against Walter Hennig of St. Louis. Frank had drilled about 1,470 feet up in Pawnee County for some outfit that ran out of money when he reached the top of the sand. Frank promptly shut down drilling operations and refused to proceed until his bill was paid. One day he received a telegram from Walter Hennig, the St. Louis magnate, which he understood guaranteed his account, if he would drill in the well. He drilled in and it turned out to be a dry hole. He thereupon sent Hennig a bill for $3,912.50. Hennig promptly "renigged" (reneged) and claimed that he merely intended to pay for the cost of drilling in, which was one day's labor and would cost about $100.00. I filed suit against Hennig in the Superior Court of Muskogee County, knowing that he came frequently to Muskogee. The Sheriff served him and he employed the best firm of lawyers in Muskogee. They promptly removed the case to the United States Circuit Court, which shortly thereafter was abolished by Act of Congress, leaving only the United States District Court to try civil cases. Judge Ralph Campbell was the Judge of the Circuit Court of the United States, and both sides waived a jury and tried it before the Judge. The skilled, experienced lawyers would have made my path very difficult, had it not been for Judge Campbell's kind helpfulness; in fact the other side intimated once or twice that he was acting as counsel for the plaintiff. When it came to the argument of the cause, they insisted that $100.00 was all that Hennig owed Richey, and one of the lawyers who was very well acquainted with the Judge asked pointedly, "Just what did Richey have to sell? Why should he want to hold Hennig for about $4,000.00? All he could possibly hire him to do was to do one day's drilling."

Judge Campbell had been a famous conductor of a bible class at McAlester before he was appointed to the Federal bench, and he replied, "Well, there is a certain wicked game that I know nothing of but I have heard it called stud-poker, and I understand that in that game it costs money sometimes to see the 'hole-card,' and I apprehend that what Mr. Richey had was the 'hole-card,' Mr. Hennig wanted to see it, and Richey showed him the 'hole-card,' and while this court is very inexperienced in gambling transactions, you may be dead sure that my judgment will be that Mr. Hennig is going to pay $4,000.00 for seeing that 'hole-card.'" The Circuit Court of Appeals of the Eighth Circuit affirmed Judge Campbell's decision, 196 Fed. 779.

In 1909, we heard that Bill Roeser was the greatest independent oil producer in the United States, that he had eight to ten thousand barrels daily production and that he was one of the richest men of the country. He came in, one day, and explained to us his theory of "luck." He said that

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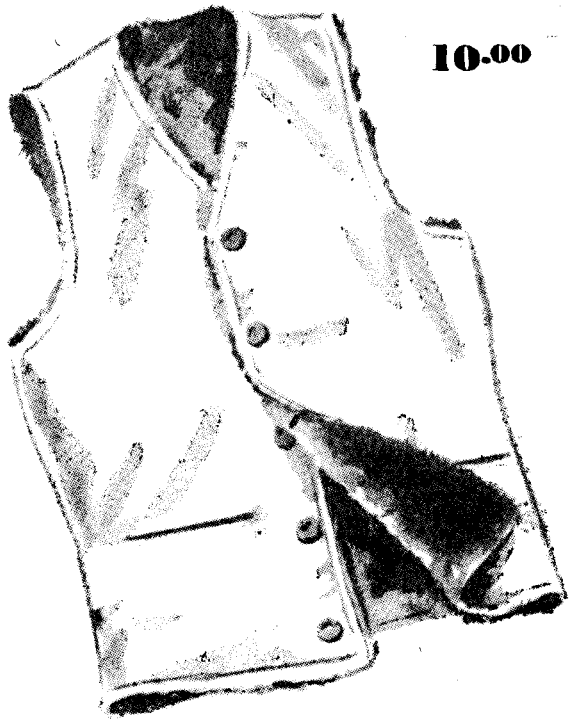

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when an oil operator was truly lucky, that he could drill a well in the alley between our office building and Hickok's livery barn and get a producer, "but," he said, "when you run out of luck you could drill in the middle of White and Sinclair's Bird Creek lease, the best producing lease in that field, and get a dry hole." We knew that things were not going too well. Frank Richey and Gene Crimmins told us of Bill's having drilled seventy dry holes. We heard that he was compelled to extend his credit at the banks, and in 1911, he came in with a drawn, haggard air and wanted to make an assignment for the benefit of creditors. It was said at that time that he had drilled three hundred dry holes; we, of course, had no means of checking that, but we know that his great, valuable properties were all mortgaged and that he was in straitened circumstances. Certain of the smaller creditors objected to the assignment for the benefit of creditors, so Bill familiarly said, "Well, what's this you call a Keeley cure for debts?" We drew up a voluntary petition in bankruptcy and filed it in the United States Court for the Eastern District of Oklahoma, and it was granted. The assets were not great, and the indebtedness was considerable. Bill looked at it mournfully and handed it over to Charlie Page, after signing the schedules. "Charlie," he said, "I can't explain how I spent all that money drilling dry holes, and it doesn't look good to them. What do you think of it?" Charlie looked at it a minute, put his hand on Bill's knee, said, "Well, Bill, don't feel downhearted, there is always a bunch of knockers, but even they will have to admit that you are a wholesaler not a retailer."

Bill tried to stage a comeback in Oklahoma, but it didn't work. Later, we heard that he was in Texas and having a hard time. Then, one day, there was a great headline across the front page of the Tulsa *World,* "Bill Roeser Is Dead." Bill had made a new strike and was worth a million again. He was giving a party to celebrate his success, similar to the one he gave in the old frame house when the guests made a bonfire of the furniture . They observed that he had stopped talking, and a friend, becoming alarmed, rushed to his side and found that his heart had stopped. Bill was one of the stronghearted "wildcatters."

When I read Mr. Stacey's article in THE COMMONWEAL, his sentence that I have set forth as a headnote, as to the daring gambler, "set these fancies floating for an hour."

Wise Man's Sons

ANNE FREMANTLE

THREE WISE Englishmen have, during the past decade, been traveling in the same general direction, namely, towards a manger; and it is the youngest of the three who, running, has outstripped his companions. Perhaps because, though Messrs. Aldous Huxley and Gerald Heard have, on occasion, broken into quite creditable verse, they are happier using M. Jourdain's medium, whilst Mr. W. H. Auden is first and foremost a poet. And poetry, though it may not always have wings, generally makes a better use than prose of its feet. Poetry, in fact, is a short cut, especially for the English, for whom it is what sculpture was to the Greeks, Gothic architecture to medieval Europe, painting to the Renaissance, music to Germany, and novels to nineteenth century Russia, a collective demonstration of what theologians have been telling us for centuries (yet it took a poet to say it simply!), that beauty is truth. And it is only in poetry that England expresses herself *sub specie aeternitatis;* her verse is her major contribution to that quotient of human civilization called the "European heritage."

Mr. Auden's new book* consists of two long poems. The first, "The Sea and the Mirror," he calls "a commentary on Shakespeare's 'Tempest.'" It has for *devise* Emily Brontë's

> Speak, God of Visions, plead for me
> And tell why I have chosen Thee

The second poem, a "Christmas Oratorio," is a continuation and a variation on this same theme; but it also tells the other half of the story—as Gabriel says to Mary:

> Lost in his freedom, man pursues
> The shadow of his images.
> Today, the Unknown seeks the known.
> What I am willed to ask, your own
> Will has to answer: child, it lies
> Within your power of choosing to
> Conceive the Child who chooses you.

In theme, therefore, both these poems cover the whole distance between Joyce's "Finnegans Wake" and Milton's "Paradise Regained." Nor does Mr. Auden suffer from comparison with these, his poetic and spiritual godfathers; in some ways he even offers more than they. For he writes completely within the idiom of his time, as did Chaucer or Shakespeare, whereas Messrs. Milton and Joyce, as also Mr. T. S. Eliot (with whose "Waste Land" and "Four Quartets" Mr. Auden's new poems will inevitably be bracketed), use language as remote from current usage as the *London Times* editorials are from G.I. speech. Though Mr. Auden sometimes still inflicts tedious private jokes on his readers (his earlier "Letters from Iceland" were full of rather school-boyish examples of these), he has never indulged in the luxury of a private language. And this is high praise, for it is a sin to which poets are prone. Leaving aside such obvious examples as Robert Browning or Robert Bridges, even such men as Maeterlinck and Yeats fell also into this vulgar error.

Mr. Auden's verse, too, always has that undercurrent of gaiety that a good nursery rhyme possesses; however tremendous or serious his theme, he is as rooted in Anglo-Saxon good sense and good humor as Goethe was in the German folk-tale or Ibsen in troll-talk. Yet there is nothing local or insular, as there is nothing apologetic, in his verse or in his statements; they are both universal and

*For the Time Being. Random House. $2.00.

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simple, yet as absolutely certain of man's place in this universe as of the everlasting arms that are underneath. And what a lyrist Mr. Auden is! I remember some years ago, when his lovely

> Lay your sleeping head, my love,
> Human on my faithless arm

appeared in "New Writing," asking Edward Sackville-West to set it to music. "I don't write *tunes,*" countered the latter scornfully. But that is what so much of Auden suggests: tunes that should be as integrally part of them as Beethoven's setting to Schiller's "Ode to Joy"; or the traditional melody of the "Adoro Te," that a child can play with five fingers; or "O Sacred Head Surrounded," which Bach pinched from a love-song, because he did not see why "the devil should have all the best tunes." Such disciplined and, at the same time, such tuneful lyrics have not been written in English since the Elizabethans—for it is to Philip Sidney rather than to Tennyson that one looks for comparison.

> All that I ask is one
> Important and elegant proof
> That what my love had done
> Was really at your will
> And that your will is love

is in the same convention as:

> Your dear mother is abed,
> Candles out and curtains spread.
> She thinks you do letters write.
> Write, but first let me indite,
> No, no, no, no, dear, not so!

Mr. Auden is as evocative as T. S. Eliot or James Joyce, as continuously symbolist and allusive. Yet, though his meters bring to mind, now Goethe:

> Out of the sour
> And shiftless water,
> Lucidly out of the dozing tree,
> Entrancing, rebuking
> The raging heart
> With a smoother song
> Than this rough world,
> Unfeeling God.

now Peer Gynt:

> Blessed Woman,
> Excellent Man,
> Redeem for the dull the
> Average way
> That common ungifted
> Natures may
> Believe that their normal
> Vision can
> Walk to perfection;

now Louis Aragon (e.g., "Le Médecin de Campagne"):

> Alone, alone, about a dreadful wood
> Of conscious evil runs a lost mankind,
> Dreading to find its Father, lest it find
> The Goodness it has dreaded is not good,
> Alone, alone, about our dreadful wood;

now Lao-Tze:

> If the muscle can feel repugnance, there is still a false move to be made;

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now Blake:

> And the jackal's eye at night
> Forces Error to keep right;

now Kafka—the whole of "Caliban to his audience;"—yet Auden's meters, his rhythms, his patterns, emerge no less supremely his own than does his thought. He is original even in his echoes, as when with "unaired beds" he parallels the "stale sheets" of Richard III; or with

> In a wet vacancy among the ash-cans,
> A waiter coupled sadly with a crow,

he recalls the utter desolation of T. S. Eliot's damp souls of housemaids sprouting in the Bloomsbury basements, or with the "shadow of his images," quoted above, he translates the "quamquam in imagine ambulat homo, tamen vane conturbatur" of the Psalmist, which Saint Augustine uses so magnificently in the fourteenth book of his "De Trinitate"; or when he uses contemporary American slang:

> We seemed
> To have what it took,
> The adrenal courage of the tiger;

or even when he repeats images cribbed from his own earlier poems, which now he uses and rinses and uses again like beloved cups. His magic, like his melody, is peculiar to himself; for him, hermits, madmen, bells, rocks, though figures that were old when the builders of the Pyramids were playing Tarots, are especially significant, as milk-white horses were for Yeats or mirrors for Rilke.

Every poet has his own luggage; yet, since the true poet is also fool, it must always be motley. And the first necessity for a poet is that he accept nothing on hearsay, nothing at second-hand; he must experiment all truth himself (partly to save us the trouble of doing it) and must complete in his imagination not only Christ's sufferings but also ours and be both sin-eater and savorer for us all. That is how and why poetry is such a short cut; where the saint arrives by long years of jackass plodding, the poet arrives by some divine sleight-of-hand. Yet, as Huxley wisely points out in his new novel, "Time Must Have a Stop," there is tremendous risk, too, in this capacity the artist has for short-circuiting moral experience by emotional intuition. As Huxley emphasizes, in a profound discussion of artistic as against spiritual values, Dante, when he reaches a greater awareness of the Beatific Vision than has been granted most human beings, used it to get upsides with his enemies; and it is rare to find an artist who, like Mr. Auden, knows as much as he feels and expresses and uses his knowledge consciously instead of "letting it rip." Indeed, Mr. Auden's Christian orthodoxy is one of the most surprising things about him. In his recent long review, in the *New Republic,* of C. N. Cochrane's "Christianity and Classical Culture," he gives a most brilliant and succinct analysis of the difference between the Christian and the pagan *Weltanschaung;* between the "monolithic monotheism," the "big man with red hair" and the Trinity—the "theological formulation of the Christian doctrine that God is love"; and between man, "an immortal divine reason incarcerated in a finite mortal body" (the pagan concept) and man, always "self-loving, just for the hell of it, or God-loving for the heaven of it; man choosing either life or death; but continually choosing. Everything he does, from going to the toilet to mathematical speculation, is an act of religious worship, either of God or of himself."

Both these long poems, too, are scholarly and thoughtful, as well as intuitively profound in their understanding of the cheats we are and the lies we tell to prevent ourselves finding ourselves out, and in their descriptions of the gruesome rags we wear when we can no longer make excuses for refusing the wedding feast and are compelled to come in. Mr. Auden states in turn the great intellectual difficulties:

> How could the Eternal do a temporal act,
> The Infinite become a finite fact,
> Nothing can save us that is possible;

and man's stupid bungling:

> Earth is cooled and fire is quenched by his unique excitement,
> All answers expire in the clench of his questioning hand,
> His singular emphasis frustrates all possible order,
> Alas, his genius is wholly for envy;

in contrast with God for Whose

> Goodness even sin
> Is valid as a sign,

and Who,

> after today
> The Father Abyss
> Is affectionate
> To all Its creatures.

The discovery of the Wise Men, who "bless each other's sin" and realize

> Space is the Whom our loves are needed by,
> Time is our choice of How to love and Why;

is followed by the meditation of Simeon, which ends with the triumphant affirmation (so tragically made by Uncle Eustace after his death in Huxley's "Time Must Have a Stop") that

> because of His visitation, we may no longer desire God as if He were lacking; our redemption is no longer a question of pursuit but of surrender to Him Who is always and everywhere present.

And the Chorus answer:

> Its errors forgiven, may our Vision come home.

Herod's very funny speech might have been written by Nietzsche; indeed, it is almost a parody of something by the author of "Also Sprach Zarathustra"; if only Hegel had had as much humor as Auden in designing his Herod, there might have been no Hitler! Auden's conclusion is a combination of Saint John's impatient boredom at the end of the Apocalypse and of Candide's interim good sense:

> In the meantime,
> There are bills to be paid, machines to keep in repair,
> Irregular verbs to learn, the Time Being to redeem,
> From insignificance. The happy morning is over,
> The night of agony is still to come; the time is noon
> When the Spirit must practice his scales of rejoicing
> Without even a hostile audience, and the Soul endure
> A silence that is neither for nor against her faith.

Perhaps Mr. Auden's capacity for outdistancing his contemporaries does not spring solely from his genius as a poet. It probably owes a good deal to his capacity for

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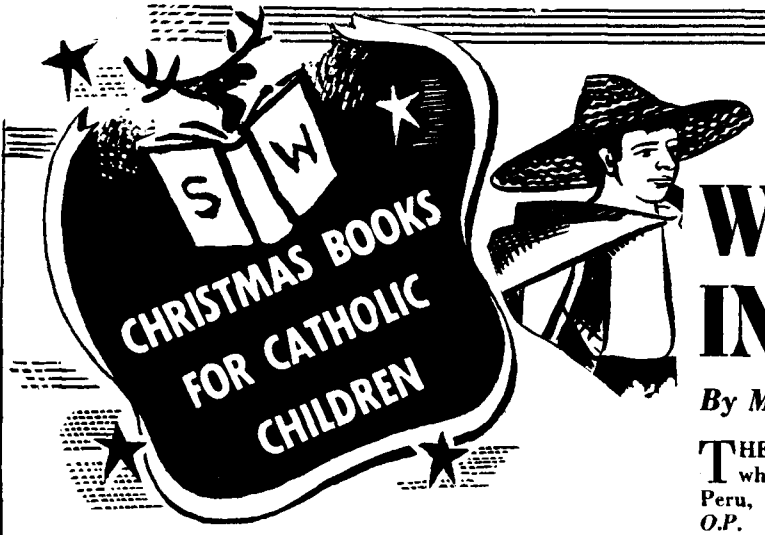

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accepting. It may be more "blessed to give than to receive"; it is certainly easier and generally pleasanter. Heard and Huxley waste a good deal of their energies in refusing, in protesting, in denying. Heard's last book, "A Preface to Prayer," is almost a plea for a new religion and, thereby, a negation of all existing ones. Huxley, in the epilogue to his new novel, states a position as remote from "common humanity" as he can make it (it is a pity his love of God has not yet conquered his interested distaste for his fellow-creatures). Only Auden accepts, as Caliban puts it, that "for us who take the bumpy, third-class road of guilt and remorse," the "time spent in actual travel is infinitesimally small." Yet Messrs. Huxley, Heard and Auden, "three men of sin," as Antonio might have called them, are all aware that:

Journeys end in lovers meeting
Every wise man's son doth know.

East and West

EGBERT L. MUNZER

SEVERAL months ago, Nicholas Berdyaev passed the biblical span of years. When the war broke out he was living at Clamart, near Paris, and lecturing at the Russian Theological Institute, together with the friend of his early socialist youth, Sergei Bulgakov. Father Bulgakov died at the time of the liberation of France. We know nothing of Berdyaev's fate at present. According to rumor the valuable library of the Russian Theological Institute was carried away to Munich by the nazis to serve as a vademecum to the Rosenberg and Haushofer circle, which was to train the "spiritual conquerors of Bolshevism." Other rumors have it that Berdyaev was imprisoned by the nazis or retired to a monastery.

It seems that Berdyaev's fame in the Anglo-Saxon countries has been in eclipse for a number of years and that the vogue which his earlier writings created has subsided. His latest books, especially "Slavery and Freedom," show a growing estrangement to Catholicism for which he had displayed much spiritual kinship ever since he had come into close contact with the West after his expulsion from the Soviet Union in 1922. Non-Catholic churches of hierarchical structure, which for a time had hailed him as one of their own, have ceased to concern themselves with him to any degree comparable to the time of his meteoric appearance in the twenties. The reviews of the more recent translations of his books have become anemic and non-committal and he seems to be doomed to oblivion during his own lifetime. This has been the fate of many great thinkers; of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche to name but two, whom Berdyaev would count amongst his spiritual ancestors. But whether his power of vision equals theirs remains to be seen.

Berdyaev does not deserve the fate of being forgotten. In our time he is the most eminent spiritual link between the East and the West. Catholics in particular owe him a great debt of gratitude beyond the merely conventional appreciation of his profound quest for truth.

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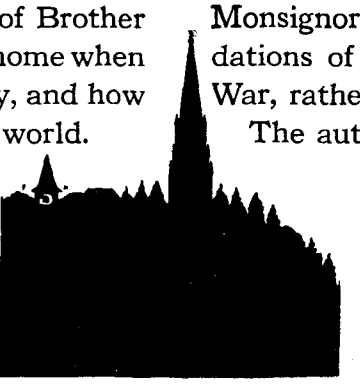

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In the beginning, Berdyaev startled the West by the acuteness of his metaphysical insight into the destiny of Western history. After Spengler's "Decline of the West," with its spell of hopelessness, its threat of impending Caesarism, and its gloom of "tragic existence," Berdyaev's "End of Our Time" and "The Meaning of History" created a violent reaction amongst the intellectuals of France and Germany. A Christian had regained the field of the philosophy of history, which seemingly had been lost to the Kingdom of this World.

Not death but resurrection, in a religious transfiguration, is the ultimate destiny of culture. Spengler's roots were laid bare: if blind destiny is man's and history's lot, humanity has no goal outside cosmic time, the Eternal Recurrence. Spengler, like German Idealism and Marxism, were unmasked as Hellenism in disguise. Anyone who tries to penetrate to the philosophical sources of the visions which Berdyaev exposes in "The End of Our Time," and to this end reads his "Meaning of History," will discover a philosophy of history which marks the first great step forward on the path of Saint Augustine's *Civitas Dei.* For Berdyaev it was Jewish, not Hellenic, speculation which, for the first time in history, delivered man from an impersonal, objectified fate that ultimately would abandon him to the forces of nature. But the Jewish preoccupation with justice rather than with the immortality of the soul caused them to lose sight of the religious transfiguration of history, of *theosis,* and instead to concentrate upon the consummation of man's destiny in some beatific state on earth. Socialism, even in its most secularized form of Marxism, originates in this aberrant Messianic idea.

This vision of history offers Berdyaev a religious point of departure for attacking the pseudo-creed of progress, as opposed to the facile relapse into the Hellenic eternal recurrence of Spengler. The quasi-religion of progress, of which socialism is but one version, is based on a metaphysically untenable disintegration of time into a bad past and a beatific future; it is morally objectionable as it relegates all past generations of mankind into the inferno of ethical inferiority; it is disproved by pragmatic history which narrates the rise and fall of every culture's exterior edifice. It is under this aspect that the age of the Renaissance and of humanism is drawing to its catastrophic close; not to be superseded by the eternal realm of socialist-communist justice — Dostoyevsky's "virtues without Christ" — but to be transfigured to the new middle ages of incubation from which a more spiritualized form of Christianity will be born.

Russia is the vanguard of the new dark age, as Berdyaev sees it in "The Origin of Russian Communism." Russian thought, biblical rather than classical, mystical rather than rational, is called to resolve speculatively the great problems posed in the West by the end of the Renaissance. Russian communism bears fundamental traits of Orthodox Asceticism, nihilism and anarchism, and will presumably prove to be a dialogical moment in history, tending toward a deep theological and spiritual purification.

It was Berdyaev's philosophy of history which impressed Western speculation most. The smug pseudo-religion of

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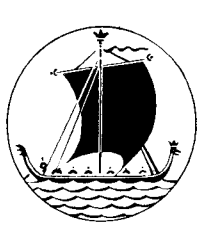

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progress was one of the first victims of the first World War and the Russian Revolution. The acute awareness of Europe's impending fate, formerly the concern of but a few lonely visionaries, such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Léon Bloy and Vladimir Solovyov, suddenly gained in depth and width. Western man was seized by Kierkegaard's "Fear and Trembling" and Heidegger's "Sorge." At this moment of spiritual anxiety and uncertainty, Berdyaev's visions appeared as the new message of hope, in the voice of the East. The West felt that Eastern thought was able to perceive Western destiny more distinctly since it was detached from occidental history. Moreover, the Eastern mind was sharpened to the problems of historical catharsis by the eruptive clash between super-imposed Westernization and indigenous culture in Russia herself.

Yet, when Berdyaev began to meditate on the metaphysical and theological sources from which his philosophy of history had sprung, he estranged many of his followers in the West. In the course of these speculations Berdyaev became probably the greatest Russian philosopher since Solovyov, and one of the outstanding living representatives of *sophia,* or *gnosis.* Sophia, the doctrine of divine wisdom, has never really taken root in Western thought, in spite of Jacob Boehme and his followers, especially certain German idealists, like Schelling.

With Solovyov, the idea of divine humanity became the central concern of sophia, and it is here that Berdyaev took his place in the sophianic current of speculation. The East always clung to the notion of Christ being our Brother, Whose Incarnation has elevated humanity to a divine race. Only few Western theologians, e.g., Scheeben, have similarly emphasized these ideas on the deification of man. For sophia, the ultimate aim of history is theosis, the transfiguration and glorification of humanity and the world in God. In this idea Berdyaev believes to have found the deepest philosophical and theological root of his metaphysics of history and man.

Two main trends which are apparently gaining momentum render the Western mind less and less responsive to Berdyaev's version of metaphysics: the re-orientation of Catholic thought towards Aristotelian-Thomist realism with its distinct separation of the natural and the supernatural; and the Neo-Protestant revival of Calvin's and Luther's depreciation of man. It is obvious that the naturalist and objective metaphysics of Aristotle and Saint Thomas are incompatible with the sophianic idea of the ultimate — quasi-pantheistic or panentheistic — unity between Creator and creation; and the Barthian emphasis on the wickedness and lowness of man denies the essential oneness of the world in God on which the entire sophianic speculation rests. For Berdyaev, Calvinist predetermination is the *reductio ad absurdum* of this false doctrine.

It is presumably this lack of response which makes Berdyaev over-rate the dogmatical and metaphysical divergencies between East and West. His attacks against Thomism occupy increasing space in his latest books. His Protestant friends will hardly be edified by his recurrent anathemas against the legalism of Calvinist ethics and the Lutheran connivance with the princes of this world. This drifting apart of Western thought from sophia has also

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affected Berdyaev's methods of presentation. He appeared like a Magus from the East, deeply concerned about the fate of the West, and addressed the occident in the stern but solicitous language of the prophet. Now he has taken upon himself the ungrateful rôle of the exorciser, his voice aggressive and full of discontent.

It seems that the tragic fate of the real seer repeats itself. The West looks spellbound at contemporary Russia and regards her political and social edifice as the ultimate revelation from the East. The voice of the prophet crying in the wilderness is drowned in the battle-cries for short-lived, worldly goals. I believe that it is Berdyaev who, in our time, speaks the language of the true Russia and that he carries the torch of light from the East.

The Stage & Screen

The Streets Are Guarded

IT IS SAD to record that Laurence Stallings's new World War piece is worrying rather than rewarding. Dealing with the Pacific end of things, the author employs a flashback technique between a Naval Hospital at Washington and a nameless small island in Japanese-held waters where are marooned a group of American sailors and airmen—one, an elderly man, badly wounded—and a Dutch nurse. Here miraculously (I guess Mr. Stallings would choose the adjective) arrives a lost Marine looking for his regiment, and the ensuing action is concerned with the incredibly successful small foray this boy is able to lead through enemy territory to procure medicines and equipment; later, his incredible direction of a larger raid; and finally, his incredible disappearance. Through it all, one is never certain whether the boy is a human savior or an angelic one, sent in answer to the wounded Petty Officer's prayers. He doesn't tell, and this unsolved mystery is what one carries home from the Henry Miller, together with the memory of a number of exciting scenes filled with technical jargon and rapid incident. I think perhaps part of this main blur is due to the kind of character Mr. Stallings has chosen for his man of faith: the Petty Officer is a loud man, tedious, querulous, certainly selfish. He is not well played by Morton L. Stevens, although this may be mainly the result of John Haggott's direction which builds the actor at times into a noisy dying condition, and at other times, leaves him in his salient bed with his burly companions complacently sitting on top of his wounded leg. But it is the part that is at fault, and it is the same fault as that evidenced by the lead in Mr. Werfel's "Embezzled Heaven." I don't know why the two stage-characters who openly believe in God, so far in the current season, should have been developed so unsympathetically by their authors. Particularly as they motivate most of the action of their respective vehicles. I think both Mr. Werfel and Mr. Stallings have undone themselves dramatically—if not realistically—by this apparent prejudice. However, performances here make the evening more than possible. George Matthews, Robertson White, Paul Crab-

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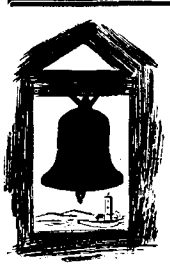

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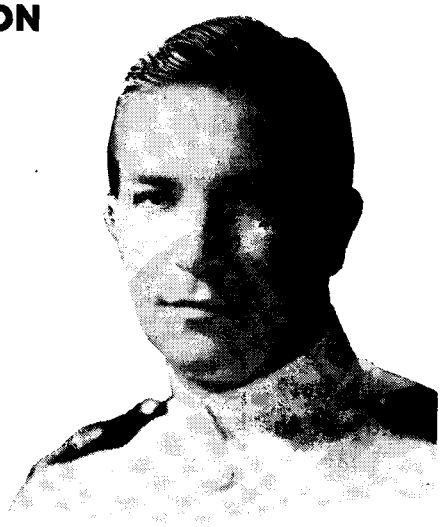

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tree, Jack Manning are excellent as fliers and sailors of assorted rank. And with the rather hysterical, accented part of the Dutch Nurse, Jeanne Cagney is proficient. In Phil Brown as The Marine, I think the director has discovered a young actor of impressive stature. He is strong, has a various voice, can move, project. A nice job. (*At the Henry Miller.*)

Rhapsody

I CANNOT imagine how Arnold Sundgaard and John Latouche—forthright writers both—managed to get mixed up in this period palimpsest. I couldn't begin to follow Mr. Sundgaard's and Leonard Levinson's book, and Mr. Latouche's lyrics sounded only good USA to me from out an Austrian setting. Aside from one or two Fritz Kreisler songs, one final ballet number dressed charmingly in black *tutus,* I can only add that the title is far from the truth. (*At the Century.*) KAPPO PHELAN.

O Flight in Thy Time

IT IS a pleasure (in these days when Hollywood producers think that every musical movie must have a backstage, radio or night club story) to see a light musical film like *"Meet Me in St. Louis"* that has nothing to do with stage folk struggling for success in the theatrical arts. From Sally Benson's stories about the Smith family, Irving Brecher and Fred Finklehoffe have written a delightful script. It has nothing of social significance to say, but it offers a revelry in nostalgia for anyone over thirty. Arthur Freed has keyed his entire production to glow with the warmth of the good old days. The fuddy-duddy Victorian house, the clothes, customs and mannerisms are all there to remind us of the past. And the whole thing is bathed in excellent technicolor that adds a sentimental touch to an already sentimental period piece.

The thin but pleasant story concentrates on the Smith children—the romances of the three older ones (played by Judy Garland, Lucille Bremer, Henry Daniels, Jr.) and the pranks of the two youngsters (portrayed with gusto, which is not overdone, by Margaret O'Brien and Joan Carroll). All this takes place in 1903 when the greatest excitement in St. Louis was the coming world's fair. A bombshell is dropped in the Smith household when Papa (Leon Ames) announces that the family will soon move to New York. Life goes on for the Smiths, but each member of the family is certain that leaving St. Louis will be the end of everything. Papa later changes his mind about the catastrophic move; so the finale shows the smiling family among the splendors of rococo plaster at the fair.

Its charming music is one of the film's greatest assets. "The Trolley Song" is one of the tunes, all of which are well integrated in the story. Judy Garland in the lead, and the chorus who pipe in with her, act and sing as if they meant every word and were having the time of their lives.

Of course Director Vincente Minnelli deserves much credit for the success of this little treat in escapism. The cast (which also includes Mary Astor, Marjorie Main, Tom Drake) respond beautifully to his thoughtful direction; a couple of the scenes are first rate cinema; notice

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particularly the Hallowe'en episode in which the O'Brien girl scares you and herself to death. At times the action gets a bit cute, but Minnelli usually manages to avoid this pitfall. Like "Life With Father," "Meet Me in St. Louis" abounds in good family spirit and has a refreshing quality that should attract the younger generation as well as old timers. It may even send you out to buy a bond; for while you don't expect a return of the golden past, you at least have the right to dream, and dreams like this can be dreamt only in a free world.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books for Christmas Giving

THE EDITORS

Fiction. The titles which we are about to describe have been selected primarily for their suitability as Christmas gifts. Naturally such a choice indicates, if not a certain literary excellence, at least a high degree of readability; on the other hand certain titles have been omitted here because they deal with subjects which were too special, pose problems which were overly brain-wracking or are simply too unpleasant or heart-rending to serve as good Christmas gifts.

There first comes to mind the sort of fiction which simply affords pleasure. Young love is an unfailing recipe and "Pastoral" by Nevil Shute (Morrow, $2.50) serves it in about as palatable a form imaginable. There is just enough anxiety about the young pilot's return from a mission to heighten the emotion. Considerably longer and quite as pleasurable is "Green Dolphin Street" by Elizabeth Goudge (Coward, $3.00). Here the scene varies from a Channel island (French) to the wilds of New Zealand—and all the way back in the mid-nineteenth century. But the narrative is much more compelling and the characters more alive than in the ordinary historical novel. The fact that it is a runaway best seller reflects the author's skill in providing both substance and entertainment. For those who relish the fine art of description few volumes could be more attractive than "The Bolinvars" by Marguerite F. Bayliss (Holt, $3.00) particularly if they have any interest in horses, dogs and foxhunting. Finally in this category is Herbert Best's "Young 'un" (Macmillan, $2.50), which, with a dialect which some find trying, tells how a young American and his sister succeeded in taming the wilderness upstate in an earlier and more primitive day.

The most distinguished work of fiction is undoubtedly Katherine Anne Porter's "Leaning Tower" (Harcourt, $2.50). This is a series of short stories or brief sketches in which Miss Porter's highly sensitive talent is manifest. Her peculiar gift is well indicated in the title of the volume which preceded her present one, "Pale Horse, Pale Rider." The reviewers, including our own, appeared to feel that Jean Stafford's "Boston Adventure" (Harcourt, $2.75) is the most interesting full-length novel published in recent months. Miss Stafford does not write of Boston nearly as acutely or as eloquently as

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J. P. Marquand, but she has style. Everyone is waiting to see what she will do next. Finally, it is good to be able to report that there are two recent Catholic novels of a certain distinction this year, even if that distinction is of a somewhat lesser sort. "Golden Rose" by Pamela Hinkson (Knopf, $2.50) deals both persuasively and poetically with romantic love and love of God in far-off India; "Now With the Morning Star" by Thomas Kernan (Scribners, $2.50) tells how a Cistercian Brother, whose monastery has been expropriated by the Nazis, keeps alive his hope of returning to the full flower of the common life.

Biography. It is just as true as ever this year that the best buys lie in the field of popular biographies. The subjects again are men and women whose lives appeal to every taste. And contemporary writers, numbed by the prolongation and intensification of this war, successfully work up enthusiasm over figures who thrived and suffered in a happier day. Most contemporary of all these studies are at least three good volumes dealing with the American labor movement. "Tailor's Progress" by Benjamin Stolberg (Doubleday, $2.75) concerns itself largely with the career of David Dubinsky; "Labor Baron" by James A. Wechsler (Morrow, $3.00) is John L. Lewis; "Labor Lawyer" by Louis Waldman (Dutton, $3.50) is autobiographical.

"Samuel Johnson" by Joseph Wood Krutch (Holt, $3.75) is perhaps the most imposing popular literary biography of the year. For those who are interested at all in the subject—how few well-read people are not—this volume will exercise considerable charm. Experts may chortle that one specimen of Dr. Johnson's handwriting was ascribed to Mrs. Thrale in the first edition. Charm is also the characteristic note of G. B. Stern's "Trumpet Voluntary" (Macmillan, $2.75) an autobiography of one of the most popular modern English novelists. Everyone agrees that "Gerard Manly Hopkins" by Eleanor Ruggles (Norton, $3.50) is a highly competent study of a figure whose poetic gifts were not at all adequately recognized until our own day. Emily Hahn's "China to Me" (Doubleday, $3.00) and "Anna and the King of Siam" by Margaret Landon (John Day, $3.75) clamor to be mentioned for their charming highlights on the Orient. American history continues to provide a wealth of biographical subjects. This year there seems to have been a special emphasis on leading figures in our Civil War. One of the best is "Fighting Joe Hooker" by Walter H. Herbert (Bobbs, $3.50). Closely related but farther back there is "John C. Calhoun" by Charles M. Wiltse (Bobbs, $3.75) which is said to be as good a study of that outstanding Southerner as any yet to appear in print.

Among the biographies of scientists which have appeared recently "Joseph Lister" by Rhoda Truax (Bobbs, $3.50) stands out for its understanding of a great pioneer in surgery and the author's excellent fictional technique. "Patrick Geddes" by Philip Boardman (North Carolina, $5.00) gives an unforgettable picture of a lion-hearted, public-spirited and most difficult man—chemist, botanist, biologist, educator and regional planner. "Gone Away

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With O'Malley" by M. O'Malley Knott with Page Cooper (Doubleday, $3.00) would make a fine present for anyone interested in horses; it is strong on charm. So too is "Peabody of Groton" by Frank D. Ashburn (Coward, $5.00) which is also the explanation of certain fine theories behind a fine preparatory school. Impressive as a gift book because of its handsome illustrations but also good as a literary study of a truly appealing artist is "Winslow Homer" by Lloyd Goodrich (Macmillan, $7.50). For those who read French there are few books more moving than Mme. Raïssa Maritain's second volume of her memoirs: *"Les Grandes Amitiés: les Aventures de la Grâce"* (Editions Maison Française, $1.75). This work is to be translated for English readers and published by Longmans several months hence.

The American Scene. For a good general background study it is hard to improve upon "The Way Our People Lived" by W. E. Woodward (Dutton, $3.95) a volume which has been out for several months. More recent and dealing with less important phenomena in an utterly delightful way are "How Dear to My Heart" by Emily Kimbrough (Dodd, $2.50) and "Combustion on Wheels" by David L. Cohn (Houghton, $2.75). The first of these tells of an Indiana childhood, the second of some early automobiling days. Bright and perceptive is D. W. Brogan's "The American Character" (Knopf, $2.50). "New Hampshire" by Keith Jennison (Holt, $2.50) is an attractive picture book, while "Rivers of the Eastern Shore" by Hulbert Footner (Farrar, $2.50) tells in text and drawing of one of America's most historic countrysides. "The Valley and Its People" by R. L. Duffus and Charles Krutch (Knopf, $2.75) is the latest volume to explain the great achievement of the TVA. "State of the Nation" by John Dos Passos (Houghton, $3.00) on the surface is a highly impersonal series of impressions of the United States and its war workers, but it is also an exceedingly sensitive speculation on things that must concern us all. Finally, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" by Dixon Wecter (Houghton, $3.00) is the most cheerful of them all, as a general idea, while the historic facts he adduces about earlier homecomings point encouragingly to an increasing sense of responsibility on the part of the American people.

History. Three books stand out in the field of historic writing this Christmastime. Pertinax's "The Gravediggers of France" (Doubleday, $6.00) is by far the most complete account of what happened to that unhappy country which made possible her collapse in 1940. It is packed with information and easy to read. Of particular interest to Catholics, or to those who want a consecutive account of the Vatican's position in recent history, is Guido Gonella's "A World to Reconstruct." It is published under the auspices of The Bishops' Committee on the Pope's Peace Points (Bruce, $3.50). Considering that the book was written in the very midst of fascist Rome, it is a remarkable vindication of the courage of Pius XII. Finally, Douglas Southall Freeman's "Lee's Lieutenants" has been completed with the publication

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of its third volume (Scribners, $5.00 each). This is certainly one of the master works in American historical writing and no handsomer present could readily be imagined.

The Shape of Things to Come. This Christmas, naturally enough, reflective Americans are bound to be devoting some of their thoughts to the world we shall know once the war is over. A limited number of books deal with the same question and possess sufficient distinction to be welcome as gifts for serious-minded recipients. Roughly, the problems of the future fall into two classes—the political and the economic. How shall the world be organized in terms of relations between the various states, and how shall the world as well as the separate states be organized to meet such problems as unemployment, over-production and under-consumption? On the political level three writers have produced particularly significant discussions. "The Time for Decision" (Sumner Welles, Harper, $3.00), "The Road to Foreign Policy" (Hugh Gibson, Doubleday, $2.50) and "U. S. War Aims" (Walter Lippmann, Little, $1.50) are all three substantial contributions to their common subject. Lippmann's previous book, elaborating his notion of foreign policy, would make a good companion piece ("U. S. Foreign Policy," Little, $1.50). William Franklin Sands's "Our Jungle Diplomacy" (North Carolina, $2.50) is written in autobiographical form, yet these reminiscences serve as a springboard for much astute criticism and provocative generalization. Another more specialized and yet fundamental book is George Weller's "Bases Overseas" (Harcourt, $3.50). Here again the approach is historical, yet the implications for the future are big with consequence. Midway between political and economic discussion comes Norman Thomas's personal declaration of belief, "What Is Our Destiny?" (Doubleday, $2.00). Here especially Mr. Thomas writes as a moralist prodding the American conscience.

A more strictly economic and empiric study is Leo Cherne's "The Rest of Your Life" (Doubleday, $2.75), which tells us less what should happen and more what is likely to happen. Mr. Cherne writes on economic subjects in a vivid style far from what you might be led to expect in connection with this dreary science. Often we wonder whether the physical resources of our planet are sufficient to support the improved and expanding standard of living which we hope may come after the liquidation of the present war. A distinguished geologist, Kirtley Mather, reassures us on this point in his "Enough and to Spare" (Harper, $2.00). The Committee for Economic Development, representing private industry, if it has done nothing else has put us in its debt by initiating a series of technical works dealing with postwar problems. As time goes on, they promise to issue a good number of volumes on such subjects. Their current specimen is "The Liquidation of War Production" (A.D.H. Kaplan, McGraw, $1.50). And to end on a lighter note, a charming exercise in humanistic vein is "The Adventures of the Young Soldier in Search of the Better World" (C.E.M. Joad, Arco, $2.00).

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Philosophy and Religion. Anne and Julian Green follow up the earlier volume of extracts from the writings of Charles Péguy, published with the French text accompanying an English translation, with a new collection, this time called "Charles Péguy: Men and Saints" (Pantheon, $2.75: the earlier volume was "Charles Péguy: Basic Verities"). There is perhaps no French author whose influence is more alive than Péguy's; to understand the world in which we live it is necessary to know something of his work. For some years the B. Herder Company of St. Louis has been issuing a series of translations of biographies and theological works by distinguished German and French writers. Many of these would make excellent gifts for seminarians or more studious-minded priests. A recent item in this series, well-suited to a broader audience, is "St. Dominic and His Work" by Father Pierre Mandonnet, O.P. ($5.00). It is not precisely exciting reading, but for those interested in the great founder of the Dominican Order it is a solid contribution. Henri Ghéon's "Secrets of the Saints" (Sheed, $3.00) is written with all the attractiveness and humanity to which we are accustomed in this modern French master of hagiography. Franz Werfel, in addition to his talents as a novelist and playwright, is capable of witty and nervous philosophical writing. He has just brought out "Between Heaven and Earth" (Philosophical, $3.00) which deserves respectful reading by those who would like to familiarize themselves with the lines along which a profoundly religious man of Jewish background is at present thinking. Perhaps the most brilliant chapter in the book is that which explains why Werfel feels that a Jew cannot become a Christian. His argument may be called unsound by theologians, but it brilliantly states what is in fact a serious problem of conscience. "Biography of a Cathedral" by Robert Gordon Anderson (Longmans, $4.00) is a discursive and readable history of Christianity in Western Europe.

Belles Lettres. There is some interesting critical work to list but Henri Peyre's "Writers and Their Critics" (Cornell, $3.00) may just as well be listed first and profitably read before proceeding to studies of individual writers. For Henri Peyre brilliantly demonstrates that very few critics understand writers, at least not until they have been dead for centuries, and so, even if the critics often are entertaining, it is not a bad idea to read a book which shows that they often also are wrong. And this is a convenient place to say that when critics are really useful, it is not because they establish a hierarchy of categories, it is not because they list merits and demerits and stand people in corners and give people prizes, it is not because they provide superficial minds with superficial assurance and judgment, it is because once in a long while they induce the reader to read the original work. It is not certain that Mark Longaker's "Ernest Dowson" (Pennsylvania, $4.00) will induce many people to read that forlorn poet, but perhaps they will read his "Non sum qualis eram," etc., which is a poem which should

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be preserved—hence the utility of this study. But surely D. B. Wyndham Lewis has written with sufficient agility, wit and understanding about "Ronsard" (Coward—Sheed, $3.50) to send someone to say five or six years' study of the French language—with concerts of Rameau and Couperin—in order afterward to read the five or six poems by Ronsard for which it is our duty to ensure immortality. Vladimir Nabokov's "Nikolai Gogol" (New Directions, $1.50) is so amusing that it can be read by itself and we can forget any ulterior and moral purpose. It is an essay which all by itself almost could teach someone how to write. And there is another book, too, which can be read for itself: André Gide's "Imaginary Interviews" (Knopf, $2.00). Gide talks about some French writers whose works at present are inaccessible while conducting a veiled and subtle war against collaborationists, but the interest in his writing remains as always our interest in his personality, which is one worth being interested in. No matter what anyone says there is another personality which, with the passing of years, increases in interest in the measure that its over-simplified characterization as that of an American who loved England unwisely and too well is revised to permit us to see the artist in proper perspective. "Henry James: The major Phase" by F. O. Matthiessen (Oxford, $3.00) hastens this process of revision. Finally there is Mr. Van Wyck Brooks who introduces us this year to "The World of Washington Irving" (Dutton, $3.75). His accomplishment is a brilliant one and this is a satisfying book to read and to give. All the figures of the early 1800's travel through America, observing, making notes, painting pictures, writing novels and poetry, preaching, arguing in the courts and in the Congress. We had forgotten that the America of those days was so busy and so interesting because it was not the America of the greatest names. Here again another judgment is revised. But when you have read this entertaining volume, please read some Cooper, a little of Simms, a little of Bryant, why not even a little of Paulding.

None of these people are Homer and of course there is the theory that it is best to read only the greatest books—a theory that has been well publicized. One answer is that we will never get round to reading the greatest books so that there is no use debating the theory. For anyone who would try more or less at the start there is a fine book to look at with wonderful pictures and a text guaranteed by all the critics of all times. Perhaps customers will think of it mostly for their friends; that is the way it happens with great books—the customer is frightened. Here it is: "The Iliad of Homer" (William Benjamin Smith and Walter Miller, a line for line translation in dactylic hexameter, illustrated with the classical designs of John Flaxman, Macmillan, $3.75). The liar magnificent is not in the same vein and the romantic illustrations which accompany Munchausen's exploits are about as far from Flaxman's chaste serenity as one could imagine, but the tales are amusing and robust: "The Adventures of Baron Munchausen," with 160 illustrations by Gustave Doré (Pantheon, $3.75). Another text, the earliest extant autobiography in English, is the

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extraordinary history of an extraordinary woman in fourteenth century England. This is "The Book of Margery Kempe" a modern version by W. Butler-Bowden; with an introduction by R. W. Chambers (Devin, $3.75). Apart from its extremely special religious interest Margery Kempe's story brings with it character after character out of medieval England, persons and streets and sounds out of the hidden past. There is no trick by which one can absorb the shock of a transition to unhappy contemporary Poland, but there is a very excellent study of Polish literature as a mirror of Polish characteristics written by a Pole who knows French and Russian literature and who consequently avoids any paralyzing nationalism: "Life and Culture of Poland" (Waclaw Lednicki, Roy, $3.50). And, just to mix things up, a volume of occasional verse we have found amusing is "The Middle Kingdom" (Christopher Morley, Harcourt, $2.00).

War Books. See publishers' adv'ts, in which the adjectives fit the merchandise.

Art Books. A modern primitive has drawn an album of some very strange people and each picture is faced by a text in which the person explains who he or she is and that this person is the "Man Who Kills Squirrels With Rocks"—and "briles" them, and that this person plays the fiddle and this person "kivers" houses and so forth. The drawings have a spare, stern interest; you will not see other books like this one and it might make an unusual gift ("Pioneers of the Ozarks," Lennis Leonard Broadfoot, Caxton, $5.00). No matter how many books are published about the French impressionists we will always recommend them because Monet, Manet and the rest are all that is left of a lost world. There is a good collection of reproductions in color and black and white: "French Impressionists and Their Contemporaries" (Random, $5.95). This year Kurt Wolff at Pantheon has brought out some extremely fine art books. There is the exquisite "Edouard Manet: Letters with Aquarelles"—21 letters reproduced in full color facsimile by the stencil process; an edition limited to 345 numbered copies (Pantheon, $24). Also two Daumier albums, the "Law and Justice" series and the "Married Life" series, each containing 24 reproductions on single plates (Pantheon, $5.50 each). Also: "Degas: Works in Sculpture," a complete catalogue with 112 collotype plates from bronzes, wax models, plaster casts and drawings, edited by John Rewald (Pantheon, $18.00). "Camille Pissarro: Letters to His Son Lucien" (Pantheon, $6.50) contains a great and intelligent artist's commentary on his times. Science in this paragraph gets but a line: there is a first rate technical treatise for amateurs or professionals, "The History of Color Photography" (Joseph S. Friedman, Photographic Pub., $10.00).

CONTRIBUTORS

T. D. LYONS, after a long interval, sends us another portrait from the past, this time from his days as a lawyer in Oklahoma rather than as a farm boy in the Dakotas.

Anne FREMANTLE is an English writer at present living in this country.

Egbert L. MUNZER is now associated with the University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario.

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